

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-26 are rejected by the Examiner. Claims 1 and 12 are cancelled in this response. Claims 2-11 and 13-26 remain pending.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) (Claims 1-7, 9-17 and 22-26) ('875 Yokoyama)

The Examiner rejects claims 1-7, 9-17 and 22-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Yokoyama, U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0016875 (referred to as the "'875 publication").

Claim 1 is cancelled in this response.

Regarding claim 2, the applicants respectfully traverse the 102(b) rejection of claim 2 and have placed claim 2 into independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim 1. Amended claim 2 recites one processor programmed to transmit a controller handshake signal through a first port and, if said first controller handshake signal does not result in communication with a controller, transmit a second controller handshake signal through a second port. In the applicants' application, a controller handshake signal is described as, in one embodiment, a signal "to determine whether a controller module is connected to that port." (Application at P. 5, lines 17-18) Applicants respectfully assert that the '875 publication does not teach such an alternating transmittal of a controller handshake signal by a single processor with concomitant inhibiting of data pass-through. The Examiner rejects claim 2 with reference to page 1, paragraph 9, lines 6-8 for anticipation of "said processor [programmed] to transmit a second controller handshake signal." (Office Action at P.3) However, at referenced

lines 6-8, the "steps of newly providing the first control signal" is in response to receipt of a signal from the processor "provided at an immediately preceding stage of connection" and so the "newly provided first control signal" is transmitted by a different processor and outputted to "an electronic apparatus to be connected at an immediately succeeding stage of connection." (Page 1, paragraph 9, lines 5-12) The relevant processors are different (different cameras in the '875 publication). The '875 publication teaches sequentially searching for processors one-way down a serial chain of cameras. The applicants describe a different configuration of modules and so require a different two-way search for connected processors. Because the '875 publication teaches transmittal of original and second controller handshakes by different processors (to accomplish a different purpose), applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 102(b) rejection of claim 2.

Claim 6 is amended in the response to depend from claim 2 (not from claim 1). For at least the reasons stated above for claim 2, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 6.

Claims 3-5, 7 and 9-11 ultimately depend from claim 1 and so contain each of its limitations. For at least the reasons stated above for claim 2, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 102(b) rejections of claims 3-7 and 9-11.

Claim 12 is cancelled in this response.

Regarding claim 13, the applicants have amended claim 13 by adding the limitation "from said processor" to make clear that the first and second handshake signals are transmitted by the

same processor through the first and second data ports, respectively, and by placing claim 13 into independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim 12. In the rejection of claim 13, the Examiner refers the applicants to "the electronic apparatus provides a new control signal" at page 1, paragraph 9, lines 6-8. However, the referenced "electronic apparatus" is actually a second apparatus from the first apparatus transmitting the original control signal. Because two processors are used in the '875 publication to transmit respective control signals and rather than the single processor recited in claim 13 to transmit each signal (to accomplish a different purpose), the applicants believe that amended claim 13 is not anticipated by the '875 publication and so request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 14-17 ultimately depend from amended claim 13 and so contain each of its limitations. For at least the reasons stated above for amended claim 13, the applicants request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 14-17.

Regarding claim 22, claim 22 has been amended to add the limitation "using said processor" to the act of "testing for the presence of said controller... through a second port if said controller is not found through said first port." (Claim 22) As described above, the '857 publication teaches a cascaded control signal query that does not anticipate looking for controllers alternately through multiple ports connected to a single processor. Use of the RS-232C standard, as illustrated in FIGs. 3 and 5 of the '857 publication, suggests a one-way examination for connected apparatus. (Page 1, paragraph 9, lines 5-12; See FIG. 5)

Claims 23-26 depend from claim 22 and so contain each of its limitations. For at least the reasons stated above for amended claim 22, the applicants request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 23-26.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) (Claims 18-21) ('536 Misunas et al.)

The Examiner rejects claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Misunas et al. (US 4,174,536) (referred to as the '536 patent).

Regarding claim 18, the applicants have amended claim 18 by adding the limitation "transmit respective controller handshake signals" to recite an active search for controllers. Because the '536 patent teaches passive listening (See Fig. 8, teaching "ANY INPUT?"), the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 102(b) rejection of claim 18.

Claims 19-21 depend from claim 18 and so contain each of its limitations. For at least the reason stated above for claim 18, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 19-21.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) (Claim 8)

The Examiner rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoyama '875 in view of Massimiliano Brocchini (*EasyDisk Removable USB Hard Disk Review*) (referred to as "Brocchini").

Claim 8 ultimately depends from amended independent claim 2 and so contains each of its limitations. For at least the reasons stated above for claim 2, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 8.

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Applicants believe that claims 2-11 and 13-26 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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